



Sinterklaas and Ecokids bring a message of environmental awareness to the YMCA youngsters.

Sinterklaas has been seen all over Aruba during the last week, in preparation for his birthday celebration today, but a very special party held on Friday afternoon, December 2, had an unusual message for the children that are in the YMCA after school program.

Sinterklaas and his Swarte Piet visited the YMCA in San Nicolas compliments of Ecotech, as part of their ongoing Ecokids environmental awareness program. Instead of the usual toys, the children received gifts of seeds and planting tools, and seedlings with instructions from Sinterklaas and his helpers in how to contribute to beautifying their environment. In addition to questions about whether they were good little boys and girls; respectful to their parents, they were also quizzed as to how to properly dispose of their trash, how to protect their environment and ecology, and instructed in the importance of recycling.

Ecokids events take place throughout the year, visiting schools and conducting programs that are training Aruba's youth from an early age to preserve and protect their environment. This was the first Sinterklass party they have sponsored, but YMCA supervisors consider it to have been a great success. Party Animals, an entertainment group for children, also donated their time with fun activities that helped to bring the message of environmental awareness across to the youngsters. But of course the center of attention was Sinterklaas and his Swarte Piet, with bags of candy for the children, and a useful gift that will keep them busy not only for an afternoon, but teach them a lesson of appreciating and protecting their ecology that will last a lifetime.